



**New Jersey Department of
Education**
Division of Abbott Implementation

**SECONDARY EDUCATION
INITIATIVE (SEI)
UPDATE**
JANUARY 2007

THANK YOU Abbott districts for your participation in SEI planning and implementation. We are making tremendous progress as we approach our September 2008 deadline.

The beginning of planning year two has been busy as districts continue working toward full implementation of small learning communities, rigorous curriculum and instruction, and the creation of student and family advocacy programs. In addition, the Institute for Research and Reform in Education and High Schools That Work has continued to provide high-quality technical assistance and support to districts via networking meetings and in-district professional development.

In an effort to increase support to districts, and to provide valuable information to friends of SEI, updates will primarily focus on readings, resources, and research to further aid in high school redesign in Abbott districts.

RESOURCES

The Southern Region Education Board's web site (www.sreb.org) offers several research articles, studies, and literature on developing effective schools grades 6-12. Once on the home page, look for the **High Schools That Work** and the **Making Middle Grades Work** links. Most of the literature and publications on the site are FREE, such as

1. *Raising Achievement and Improving Graduation Rates: How Nine High Schools That Work Sites are Doing It*
<http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/briefs/RaisingAchievementGraduationRates.asp>; and
2. *Raise Academic Standards and Get More Students to Complete High School: How 13 Georgia Schools Did It*
<http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/briefs/RaisingAcademicStandardsGA.asp>

The **Institute for Research and Reform in Education's** Web site provides in-depth analysis of school change and the processes involved in sustaining change. The Web site is **www.irre.org**. Most of the literature and publications on the site are FREE, such as *A Guide to the Family Advocate System*. Philadelphia: Institute for Research and Reform in Education. IRRE. (2005).
<http://www.irre.org/publications/#reports>



EdTrust.org provides FREE literature on issues related to P-12 education and college. There is a section on the site devoted to secondary education in

particular, called **Highlight on High Schools**. Feel free to peruse the article **Yes We Can: Telling Truths and Dispelling Myths about Race and Education in America**. In this article, the authors challenge educators around the country as they grapple with how to create and sustain high-quality schools for all children. Examples of schools (elementary, middle, and high school) where children have shown great progress and achievement are featured as well. In **Gaining Traction, Gaining Ground: How Some High Schools Accelerate Learning for Struggling Students**, the authors detail how high schools have addressed struggling students and the characteristics of these high-performing schools.

Betterhighschools.org is a resource Web site developed in partnership with the Regional Comprehensive Centers of the US Department of Education. The site is administered by the American Institute for Research from a grant from the US Department of Education. Although newly developed, useful resources already exist on the site.

You are invited to take advantage of these sources in addition to the Abbott Secondary Education Initiative Web site for information as well as updates about the initiative and programs. The Web site is <http://www.nj.gov/njded/abbotts/sei/>

SEI ACTIVITIES

In addition to planning and strategy meetings, the Secondary Education Initiative team was quite active throughout the past. Below is a summary of activities:

Institute for Research and Reform in Education Professional Development with Orange and Elizabeth

IRRE has been working diligently with both Orange and Elizabeth School Districts for the past year. Work in Orange has centered on follow-up professional development activities during the summer and fall since the middle and high schools have restructured into small learning communities. Work in the Elizabeth School district has centered on developing student and family advocacy programs.

New Jersey Department of Education Summer Conference August 7-9, 2006

High Schools That Work Summer Math & Literacy Institutes

Teachers, administrators, and supervisors from 10 districts* representing literacy (English) and math participated in three professional development days during this institute. The institute was designed to enhance instruction; create rigorous, aligned curriculum; develop common and useful assessments; and create high-quality lesson plans for the upcoming school year. (These districts are also known as Rigor I-Rigor is the area; I represents the planning year). Having worked with Rigor I districts throughout the 2005-06 academic year, coaches assigned to the districts will conduct follow-up visits during the school year.

September 11, 2006

Training Session with the Office of Student Achievement and Fiscal Support

SEI Team members facilitated a day-long work session with education program development specialists on high school redesign and the Secondary Education Initiative. The team implemented protocols to aid in dialogue to determine how best to support districts with restructuring, rigor, and advocacy beyond the September 2008 deadline for implementation. Presently, each education specialist is versed in the Secondary Education Initiative regulations, and has attended network meetings and related professional development activities with their assigned districts.

Rigor I Districts*

Asbury Park	Millville
Burlington City	Pleasantville
Irvington	Salem City
Trenton	Vineland
Gloucester City	Camden

October 17, 2006

Abbott Secondary Education Initiative Network Meeting

This network meeting was the first held for the second planning year for all Abbott

districts. Again, we are attracting capacity audiences with participation exceeding 300 colleagues! After observation and feedback from the 2005-06 network meetings, the Secondary Education Initiative team decided to emphasize areas that would further aid districts this planning year. The team also decided to structure the meetings to allow more time and focus. To that end, common planning time, creation of the student and family advocacy program, leadership and rigor, planning for implementation, continuation of workshops in math and literacy, scheduling, and district presentations will serve as core workshops for the network meetings this year. Future sessions may include workshops and presentations, if time permits.

**September 2006; October 24-27
High Schools That Work –Rigor II
Training**

High Schools That Work began professional development sessions with our “Rigor II” districts. As listed below, this cadre of districts will receive up to 14 months of professional development and coaching that address rigorous curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the year with High Schools That Work. Sessions focusing on readiness for college prep Algebra I and English I began near the end of October with two-day workshops for participating districts. Follow-up includes coaching sessions and visits between October 2006 and March 2007.

Rigor II Districts

East Orange	Garfield
Harrison	Keansburg
Neptune	New Brunswick
Perth Amboy	Phillipsburg
Plainfield	Asbury Park
Camden	Bridgeton

PLEASE BOOKMARK!

The Northwest Regional Education Laboratory provides an excellent Web site on resources to learn about small learning communities:

<http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sslc/index.shtml>

SUMMARY OF SEI

Goal: To provide an opportunity for all students to achieve academically and graduate from high school prepared to engage in post-secondary education for college or career training.

This goal will be accomplished through:

1. Creation of small learning communities;
2. Increasing the rigor of instruction; and
3. Ensuring that every student receives regular personalized attention from at least one adult professional.

All Abbott districts are required to begin planning for changes in their secondary schools (grades 6-12) by creating a planning committee.

Support: Quarterly network meetings will be held for teams from all Abbott districts. At these programs, participants will be exposed to approaches to implement the three elements of the initiative: small learning communities (including how to schedule for them), increasing academic rigor, and increasing personalization.

Upcoming Events

- **Secondary Education
Advisory Group Meeting
March 5, 2007
Location TBA**

- **Abbott Secondary
Education Initiative Network
Meeting
8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
May 8, 2007-
Sheraton Hotel & Conference
Center
Eatontown, New Jersey**

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